# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Brexit and Devolution**  |
| **DATE**  | **15 June 2017** |
| **BY** | **Carwyn Jones AM, First Minister**  |

In January I published, jointly with Plaid Cymru, the Welsh Government’s White Paper “Securing Wales’ Future” which outlined our agenda and priorities for Wales as the UK prepares to leave the European Union (EU). I said then that this marked the beginning of a dialogue, not its end, and signalled my intention to publish a series of further policy documents to extend the debate both here in Wales and the United Kingdom (UK).

Today I am publishing the first of those policy documents, “Brexit and Devolution”, which can be found online at: [www.gov.wales/brexit](http://www.gov.wales/brexit).

This policy document builds on positions outlined initially in “Securing Wales’ Future”. We are clear that powers already devolved to Wales will remain devolved after EU exit unless the UK Government specifically legislates to change our devolution settlement. Any such move would be wholly unacceptable. The people of Wales have voted for our powers in two referendums (1997 and 2011) and this must be respected by the UK Government.

The Welsh Government readily accepts that, after we have departed the EU, there may be a need to develop binding UK-wide policy frameworks, in some devolved areas, in order to prevent friction within our own internal UK market. The right way to do this will be through the UK Government and devolved administrations sitting down together to discuss and agree frameworks. The Welsh Government will be a willing partner in such an approach. We will not, though, acquiesce in any attempt by the UK Government arbitrarily to constrain powers already devolved.

We further believe that leaving the EU creates the need for a new dynamic among the four governments within the UK. It seems clear that there is much we should do together if we are to move forward coherently in our new circumstances. In our view, this four-way collaboration could, and should, be a positive development. It is equally clear that the existing inter-governmental machinery within the UK is not fit-for-purpose in the circumstances. We propose, and describe in outline, the establishment of a UK Council of Ministers as a way of developing a common future agenda rooted in democratic principles. The aim is to respect all, and threaten none. In this context, the policy document is intended as a constructive contribution to the discussions that are needed to develop a strengthened constitutional framework within the UK, which has devolution at its heart.

I commend the document to Assembly Members and I will be making an Oral Statement next Tuesday which will enable the ideas to be explored more fully.